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form the conclusions commonly held by modern scholars respecting Judges and Ruth, except that the author does not recognize in the Book of Ruth a polemical pamphlet directed by a prophetic writer against the narrowness and national exclusiveness of the preaching of Ezra and his priestly school. Dr. Cooke gives an admirable sketch of the primitive and crude character of the early Hebrew life in Canaan, and his comments on the text are sufficiently full to answer all the requirements of the class of readers for whom this series is prepared.

Professor Moulton has well said that Ecclesiasticus offers an excellent example of the evolution of the essay out of the proverb. Ben-Sira shows a marked advance in his method of treatment upon the older collection of Proverbs. Although his book exhibits no great originality, yet the writer of Ecclesiasticus adds to the older material, of which he makes abundant use, a wealth of independent thought which witnesses to a large amount of individuality. The mass of information which the book contains regarding Jewish religious thought and ethics, during a period for which we do not otherwise possess much information, marks it out as a work of high importance. The writer evidently intended to offer to his people a kind of text-book to which men and women might have recourse for guidance in almost every conceivable circumstance of life. He does this, however, with the primary object of setting in clear light the superior excellence of Judaism over Hellenism. In a sense, therefore, Ecclesiasticus is to be regarded as an apologetic work, inasmuch as it aims at combating the rising influence of Greek thought and culture among the Jews.

Such in brief is Dr. Oesterley's view concerning the nature of the book of which he is treating. His notes on the text are most suggestive to the Sunday School teacher (should such ever wander into the Apocrypha) and also to the Hebrew scholar. The latter will find the copious references to the various versions of value.

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**LIGHT ON THE FOUR GOSPELS.** From the Sinai Palimpsest. AGNES SMITH LEWIS. Williams and Norgate. 1913. Pp. xi, 226. 3s. 6d.

This volume is from an author to whom Biblical science is greatly indebted for her discovery in 1892 of the Syriac Sinai Palimpsest of the Gospels, and for her publications in the field of Semitic research. It is a popular work, reproducing in part material that

has been published previously in the Expository Times and that has also been used in public addresses.

Mrs. Lewis seeks in an attractive and untechnical way to acquaint her readers with some questions of New Testament textual criticism which have been raised by the discovery and fuller knowledge of the Old Syriac text. The section of greatest value is that comprised in chapters four to nine. Here some of the more important variant readings of the Sinai Palimpsest are given in English translation for each of the four Gospels in turn. The differences between the Syriac and the Greek are made perfectly clear in each instance to those who are unacquainted with either language. A statement is often added as to the important Versions and manuscripts which are in agreement with the Old Syriac text. The way is thus open for the reader to gain some impression as to the extent of the support given by this text to the so-called "Western" readings. Mrs. Lewis, however, is not so much interested to point this out as to vindicate the general trustworthiness of the Sinai Palimpsest, and more particularly to show that its readings can be accepted without detriment to faith. It is but natural that long devotion to this manuscript should make her an enthusiastic advocate of its excellence, and that, too, at a time when the importance of its testimony is generally recognized by New Testament scholars. In the opening chapters she argues for an early date for the Old Syriac translation of which it is a representative, and for the possible perpetuation in that version of some of the very turns of expression used by Jesus in the closely allied dialect of the Galilean Aramaic.

A discussion of controverted points is not to be expected in such a book; nor is it reasonable, perhaps, to demand that there be a more extended and adequate treatment of the textual variants of the Syriac. It is much to be regretted, however, that so little effort has been made to explain, not to say, follow, the principles which must govern in the quest for the original text of the Greek New Testament. There is more than one passage in this little volume which might lead the thoughtful reader to infer that textual criticism is, to say the least, a somewhat whimsical science. An illustration may be found in the following defence of the Syriac reading that Jesus "*was standing* and tal'ing" with the woman of Samaria (John 4 27): "This slight detail of the narrative is found, so far as we know, in no other manuscript. But it is quite in keeping with our Lord's character that He should have forgotten His own weariness, and should have risen to His feet in order to impress more vividly on the woman those great truths which He was reveal-

ing to her. And the change of attitude may have been prompted by an innate feeling of the chivalry which was eventually to blossom out of His teaching. Standing is not the usual habit of the Jewish Rabbi when he is engaged in teaching, so it is all the more remarkable that our Lord should have shown so much courtesy to our sex in the person of one of its most degraded representatives. The little word of *qâ'em*, 'standing,' has so much significance, that we cannot suppose it to be a mere orthographical variant" (p. 147).

The book closes with two brief chapters on entirely distinct topics. The first proposes some emendations which Mrs. Lewis believes would help to make the Revised Version of the Bible a more intelligible and more consistent translation; while the last chapter is made up of a series of paragraphs aiming to show how various statements of Scripture have been confirmed by modern scientific investigation and discovery.

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**JESUS THE CHRIST: HISTORICAL OR MYTHICAL? A Reply to Professor Drews' *Die Christusmythe*.** T. J. THORBURN. T. & T. Clark. 1912. Pp. 311. \$2.50.

In a brief introduction the author states the views of a few writers who have denied the historicity of Jesus. Then he presents the historical data in support of Jesus' existence. The concept of a suffering Messiah is held to have been no part of pre-Christian Jewish belief, and so could not have supplied the first Christians the model for their messianic faith. This they derived from historical experience. More positive testimony for Jesus' historicity is drawn from the gospels, Paul, Josephus, Roman writers, and Jewish tradition. The second part of the volume deals with the mythological data which opponents have found in the Gospels. After denying the existence of any pre-Christian Jesus-cults, Thorburn refutes the arguments which have been advanced to prove the mythical character of numerous gospel items. He arrives at three conclusions: (1) the *Christ* of Paul is identical with the Jesus of the synoptists; (2) the *Jesus* of the synoptists is a historical person; and (3) the *Jesus Christ* of primitive Christianity is no mere idea subsequently precipitated and historicized as the founder of a religion. The argument, we believe, would have gained in clearness and force had the author distinguished more sharply between the Jesus of history and the Christ of early faith.

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